

## Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY WARSAW IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 209402

E.O. 11652: X;DS-3,4

TAGS: SCUL, CSCE, PFOR, PL, US

SUBJECT: POLISH AMBASSADOR'S DEMARCHE ON FILM "THE END"

REF: WARSAW 6967

1. SUMMARY: POLISH AMBASSADOR SPASOWSKI CALLED ON THE COUNSELOR AUGUST 16 TO DELIVER A FORMAL PROTEST AGAINST THE FILM "THE END" AND REQUEST THAT THE USG TAKE ACTION TO BAN IT FROM CIRCULATION. THE COUNSELOR EXPLAINED THE CONSTITUTIONAL RESTRICTIONS AGAINST USG INTERFERENCE IN CIRCULATION OF A COMMERCIAL FILM BUT EXPRESSED REGRET AT THE FILM'S VULGAR INSULTS AGAINST POLES AND POLAND AND PROMISED TO INFORM APPROPRIATE USG AGENCIES ABOUT SPASOWSKI'S DEMARCHE. END SUMMARY.

2. SPASOWSKI OPENED WITH THE OBSERVATION THAT HIS SUBJECT  
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WAS NOT A PROPITIOUS ONE FOR A FIRST MEETING WITH THE COUNSELOR. HE EXPLAINED THAT HE HAD BEEN INSTRUCTED BY WARSAW TO MAKE A DEMARCHE AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL IN THE DEPARTMENT TO PROTEST THE FACT THAT A FILM PRODUCED AND DISTRIBUTED IN THE UNITED STATES CONTAINS MATERIAL OFFENSIVE TO THE POLISH PEOPLE AND, ABOVE ALL, TO THE POLISH NATIONAL ANTHEM. HE POINTED OUT THAT POLAND CON-

SIDERS THIS A CONTRAST TO THE RICH TRADITION OF US-POLISH

RELATIONS, ESPECIALLY IN THE CULTURAL AREA, AND INCONSISTENT WITH BASKET III OF THE HELSINKI FINAL ACT, WHICH CALLS FOR FRIENDSHIP AND THE BEST POSSIBLE CULTURAL RELATIONS AMONG ALL COUNTRIES.

3. SPASOWSKI CONTINUED THAT HIS GOVERNMENT EXPECTS THE USG WILL TAKE "ALL APPROPRIATE, POSSIBLE STEPS" TO ENSURE THE FILM WILL NOT BE SHOWN IN THE UNITED STATES OR ABROAD. NOTING THAT THE COUNSELOR COULD UNDERSTAND WHY WE ARE ASKING THIS, SPASOWSKI EMPHASIZED THE "DEEP CONCERN" AROUSED BY THE FILM NOT ONLY IN POLAND BUT AMONG POLISH ETHNIC GROUPS IN THE U.S. CONCLUDING, SPASOWSKI ADVISED THAT IT IS HIS DUTY TO CONVEY TO HIS GOVERNMENT EXACTLY WHAT THE COUNSELOR SAYS IN RESPONSE. HE ADDED THAT IT IS THE GOP'S INTENTION TO RELEASE THE FACT OF SPASOWSKI'S DEMARCHE TO THE PRESS, EXPLAINING THE SUBJECT BUT NOT QUOTING EITHER HIS REMARKS OR THOSE OF THE COUNSELOR.

4. THE COUNSELOR EXPLAINED THAT IT IS THE POLICY OF THE US GOVERNMENT TO HAVE GOOD RELATIONS WITH POLAND. WE HAVE THE HIGHEST RESPECT FOR POLAND AND ITS PEOPLE. WE TRY HARD TO FULFILL THE GOALS OF THE FINAL ACT, WHICH SPEAKS OF UNDERSTANDING AND COOPERATION AMONG COUNTRIES. THIS MOVIE, WHICH THE COUNSELOR SAID HE HAD NOT SEEN, WAS CONFIDENTIAL

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PRODUCED UNDER PRIVATE AUSPICES. THE COUNSELOR POINTED OUT THAT IN THE AMERICAN SYSTEM THERE IS NO MECHANISM FOR THE USG TO MOVE AGAINST A BOOK OR A MOVIE, SO THERE IS NO WAY THE USG COULD ACT TO PREVENT THIS FILM'S SHOWING IN COMMERCIAL CHANNELS. EXPRESSING REGRET AT ANY OFFENSE TO POLES OR POLAND CONTAINED IN THE MOVIE AND REGRET THAT THERE IS NO OFFICIAL ACTION WE CAN TAKE AGAINST IT, THE COUNSELOR PROMISED TO CONVEY SPASOWSKI'S DEMARCHE TO OTHER USG AGENCIES SO THEY WILL KNOW THE POLISH GOVERNMENT'S FEELINGS ABOUT THIS FILM.

5. ASKING TO SAY A FEW WORDS MORE, SPASOWSKI SAID HE HAD SEEN THE FILM AND FOUND IT TO HIS TASTE A "BAD MOVIE." THE MOST SENSITIVE PART FOR POLES, WHICH IS HARMFUL AND CANNOT BE TOLERATED BY THEM, IS THE VULGAR REFERENCE TO THE POLISH NATIONAL ANTHEM. WERE IT NOT FOR THIS, THE QUESTION OF THE OTHER ANTI-POLISH JOKES WOULD BE IN A DIFFERENT CATEGORY, BUT SLURRING THE NATIONAL ANTHEM IN SUCH A WAY REQUIRES A STRONG REPRESENTATION. SPASOWSKI ILLUSTRATED POLISH SENSITIVITY BY RECALLING THAT DURING THE WAR SOME OF HIS CLOSEST FRIENDS WENT TO THEIR DEATHS IN PUBLIC EXECUTIONS WHILE SINGING THE NATIONAL ANTHEM.

HE CONCLUDED THAT HE "ALREADY KNOWS" THAT THE SHOWING OF THIS MOVIE COULD BE DAMAGING FOR POLISH-AMERICAN RELATIONS,

SO WHATEVER ACTION THE COUNSELOR COULD TAKE WOULD BE "VERY IMPORTANT."

6. THE COUNSELOR RESPONDED BY POINTING OUT THAT THE FILM WAS CREATED BY A PRIVATE GROUP WITH NO POLITICAL MOTIVATION AND THAT THE SLURS IT CONTAINS ARE GRATUITOUS. HE RECALLED THAT IN THE U.S. THERE WERE SOME COURT CASES A FEW YEARS AGO INVOLVING POLITICAL VULGARITIES AGAINST THE AMERICAN FLAG AND IT WAS DETERMINED THAT NO MATTER HOW OFFENSIVE WERE SUCH ACTIONS--EVEN BURNING THE FLAG--THEY WERE NOT PROSECUTABLE. CONTINUING, THE COUNSELOR RECOGNIZED THAT THE FILM INCIDENT MIGHT BRING SOME HARM TO OUR RELATIONS BUT EXPRESSED A HOPE THE GOP WILL DO ITS BEST TO PUT IT IN PROPER PERSPECTIVE. HE POINTED OUT THAT SUCH A BAD FILM IS NOT LIKELY TO HAVE MUCH CIRCULATION AND EXPRESSED A HOPE IT WILL SOON DISAPPEAR AS AN IMPEDIMENT IN OUR RELATIONS.

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7. TURNING TO ANOTHER SUBJECT, THE COUNSELOR, NOTING THAT SPASOWSKI HAD MENTIONED THE FINAL ACT, OBSERVED THAT IMPLEMENTATION HAS NOT BEEN COMPLETE BUT MUCH HAS BEEN DONE. SPASOWSKI REPLIED THAT POLAND'S RECORD IN THE CULTURAL AREA IS GOOD. THE COUNSELOR THEN MENTIONED THERE HAS BEEN SOME PROGRESS IN FAMILY REUNIFICATION, ALTHOUGH THIS REMAINS A PROBLEM BETWEEN US. CONCLUDING, THE COUNSELOR EXPRESSED THE USG DESIRE FOR CONSULTATION WITH THE GOP ON CSCE MATTERS. HE STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE THE PRESIDENT AND NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER ATTACH TO POLISH-AMERICAN RELATIONS.

8. COMMENT: IMMEDIATELY AFTER THEIR MEETING THE COUNSELOR TELEPHONED JACK VALENTI, PRESIDENT OF THE MOTION PICTURE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA, TO ADVISE HIM OF THE POLISH DEMARCHE. HE INSTRUCTED THE DESK OFFICER TO INFORM AMBASSADOR SPASOWSKI OF THIS. TELEPHONED UPON HIS RETURN TO THE EMBASSY, SPASOWSKI EXPRESSED APPROVAL OF THE COUNSELOR'S ACTION. THE AMBASSADOR WILL DOUBTLESS INCLUDE THIS IN HIS REPORT TO WARSAW. NEVERTHELESS, SPASOWSKI REITERATED HIS FEELINGS EXPRESSED TO THE DESK OFFICER ON LEAVING THE DEPARTMENT AFTER MEETING WITH THE COUNSELOR THAT, ALTHOUGH HE UNDERSTOOD OUR CONSTITUTIONAL STRICTURES AGAINST INTERFERENCE WITH FILM DISTRIBUTION, HE WILL NEED SOMETHING MORE FROM THE DEPARTMENT TO ASSUAGE OFFICIALS IN WARSAW.

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9. WE HAVE LEARNED THAT CONGRESSMAN JOHN FARY OF CHICAGO SPOKE IN CONGRESS AUGUST 1 TO CONDEMN THE FILM'S

ANTI-POLISH NATURE. WE HAVE ADVISED THE POLISH EMBASSY OF THIS AND WILL SEE THAT IT GETS THE TEXT OF FARY'S REMARKS.

10. WE ARE CONSIDERING FURTHER STEPS WE COULD TAKE THAT WOULD DEMONSTRATE TO THE POLES THE USG'S CONCERN ABOUT THE FILM'S INSULTS TO POLES AND POLAND WITHOUT GIVING IT FREE PUBLICITY.

11. WE HAVE ALSO POINTED OUT TO AMBASSADOR SPASOWSKI THAT POLISH PUBLICIZING OF HIS DEMARCHE WOULD BE PICKED UP BY WESTERN WIRE SERVICES IN WARSAW WHICH WOULD FEED THE STORY TO THE U.S. THIS WOULD GENERATE PUBLICITY HERE AND, NO DOUBT, QUESTIONS AT OUR NOON BRIEFING. WE EXPLAINED TO THE AMBASSADOR THAT WE ARE PREPARED TO ANSWER SUCH QUESTIONS, BUT WE WONDER IF THE PUBLICITY COULD BACKFIRE IN THE FORM OF INCREASED CIRCULATION OF THE FILM. SPASOWSKI ACKNOWLEDGED THE PROBLEM BUT WOULD ONLY SAY THAT HE WILL NOT ENCOURAGE HIS GOVERNMENT TO PUBLICIZE THE DEMARCHE.

12. ACTION REQUESTED: WE WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR TRYING, IN WHATEVER WAY YOU DEEM APPROPRIATE, TO DISCOURAGE THE GOP FROM PUBLICIZING SPASOWSKI'S DEMARCHE, FOR THE REASONS INDICATED IN PARA 11. ALTHOUGH SPASOWSKI TOLD US THE MORNING OF AUGUST 17 THAT HE HAD NOT YET SENT HIS REPORT TO WARSAW, IT IS POSSIBLE THE GOP WILL GO AHEAD AND RELEASE THE STORY IN ADVANCE. VANCE

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## Message Attributes

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